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RELIEF FOR SPICEJET OVER REFUND TO SUN GROUP'S KALANITHI MARAN

Delhi HC on Friday set aside a single bench order that upheld an arbitral award asking SpiceJet to refund ₹270 cr to its ex-promoter

DISPUTE DATES BACK TO JANUARY 2015

The dispute between Maran and SpiceJet dates back to January 2015 when Ajay Singh, who used to own SpiceJet before Maran, bought it back from him. Maran reportedly transferred his 58.46% stake to Singh in return for redeemable warrants, which were allegedly not issued to him. Maran then approached Delhi HC for payout, which referred the matter to arbitration

TRIBUNAL HAD SET 18% INTEREST TO BE PAID

- The arbitral tribunal gave its order in July 2018 and ordered SpiceJet to refund ₹270 crore to Maran. The tribunal also asked the airline to pay interest of 12% per annum on the amounts paid towards warrants and 18% per annum on the sums awarded to Maran if the money is not paid on time
- SpiceJet then moved the Delhi HC to challenge the arbitral order | P13

5.46%

SPICEJET STOCK CLOSED AT ₹63 A SHARE ON BSE ON FRIDAY, UP FROM THURSDAY'S ₹59.74

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi greets his mother Sonia Gandhi during a public meeting in Rae Bareli on Friday, as his sister Priyanka looks on | PTI

Sonia hands Rae Bareli fight to son

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

STRIKING an emotional chord with the voters in Rae Bareli, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi said on Friday that she is handing over her son to the people of Rae Bareli with the promise that her son won't disappoint them.

Addressing a joint election rally at the meeting at ITI ground in Rae Bareli, the former Congress chief asked the people to consider her son as their own.

"Rahul will not disappoint you," said Sonia, flanked by her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka on the stage. "Everything I have is given by you. So, brothers and sisters, I am giving you my son. Consider him yours," she said.

Sonia said she has taught her children the values that she learnt from her mother-in-law and former PM late Indira Gandhi and the people of Rae Bareli: To respect all, protect the weak, fight against injustice for the rights of people. "Don't be afraid, because your roots of struggle and traditions are very deep," she added.

Sonia said the Gandhi family roots are deeply connected to Rae Bareli. "This relationship is as sacred as Mother Ganga is with the farmers of Awadh and Rae Bareli. It started with a movement and continues till today," she said.

Sonia said Indira Gandhi, who was an MP from Rae Bareli, had a special place for the constituency in her heart. "I saw her closely while working. She had immense affection for you," she said.

Sonia was first elected as an MP from Rae Bareli in 2004 and represented the seat till she vacated it early this year after getting elected as a Rajya Sabha member.

AMETHI PITCH

Rahul Gandhi said if he wins, he would treat Amethi and Rae Bareli equally on development. "If ₹10 is spent in Rae Bareli, it would be the same for Amethi too," he said

daCunha/AB/043

Supplementary ED chargesheet names Kejri, AAP

Eighth chargesheet in the money laundering case linked to the excise policy scam so far

UJWAL JALALI @ New Delhi

THE Enforcement Directorate on Friday filed a supplementary chargesheet in the money laundering case linked to the Delhi excise policy scam in which it named Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party as accused.

The chargesheet was filed before a special court here under various provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Special Judge Kaveri Baweja is likely to take it up for cognisance in the coming days.

This is the eighth chargesheet filed by the probe agency in the case in which it has arrested 18 people so far. Last week, a similar complaint was filed by the ED against BRS leader and former Telangana chief minister Chandrashekar Rao's daughter K Kavitha and four others.

On Tuesday, the ED had informed the Delhi High Court that it will name the AAP as an accused in the case. ED's lawyer had said there were concerted efforts by the accused to delay the process of framing of charges in the case.

Even before the Supreme Court, the ED had said it was contemplating to make AAP an accused and invoke Section 70 of the PMLA to probe the aspect of "vicarious liability".

Last month, the Delhi High Court had suggested while hearing the case that a political party could be brought within the purview of the PMLA. It said a political party means "an association" or "a body of individuals", which falls within the ambit of Section 70 of the PMLA. Subsequently, the ED had likened the AAP to a company and Kejriwal its director.

The federal agency had arrested Kejriwal, 55, also the AAP's national convenor, from his official residence here on March 21. He is currently out of jail on interim bail.

The ED had labelled Kejriwal as the "kingpin and key conspirator" of the Delhi excise scam. It alleged that he acted in collusion with his ministerial colleagues, party leaders and other persons.

The case pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in formulating and executing the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22, which was later scrapped.

Accused in 2 capacities

Arvind Kejriwal has been made an accused in the case in his personal capacity as well as the national convenor of his Aam Aadmi Party under various sections of the PMLA

DKS offered me ₹100 cr to name HDK as mastermind: Devaraje

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hassan

GIVING a new twist to the Hassan sex scandal case, BJP leader and advocate Devaraje Gowda on Friday alleged that DCM DK Shivakumar had offered him Rs 100 crore to accuse former CM and JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy of masterminding circulation of pen drives allegedly containing obscene videos of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna.

Disclosing this to reporters on the district court premises here before the local police handed him over to SIT sleuths, Gowda alleged that the plan was to defame Kumaraswamy and end his political career. "Shivakumar forced me to target Kumaraswamy as the mastermind behind the distribution of pen drives. Shivakumar threatened me that you will be safe only if you target Kumaraswamy in the pen drive case," he alleged.

Devaraje Gowda talks to the media from a police van in Hassan on Friday

Gowda said Shivakumar allegedly formed a ministers' committee comprising Chaluvarayaswamy, Krishna Byre Gowda and Priyank Kharge to deal with the issue. Shivakumar also hatched a conspiracy to tarnish the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the NDA government by linking Prajwal to the sex scandal. "When I refused to obey his directions, the DCM sent former Congress MLC MA Gopalaswamy to a private club where I stayed to give me Rs 5 crore," Gowda alleged.

Former MLA LR Shivarame Gowda also became a mediator between him and Shivakumar, he alleged and added that he has an audio conversation of Shivakumar targeting Kumaraswamy and Modi. "I will release it at an appropriate time," he claimed. P4

RAIN BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR RCB

A resurgent Royal Challengers Bengaluru will face five-time champions Chennai Super Kings in a do-or-die match that will decide the fourth and final team for the IPL playoffs in Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday. RCB's fight will not just be with the Men in Yellow, but also with the Rain Gods as showers are forecast for Bengaluru on Saturday. RCB will need to win by at least 18 runs or chase the target with 11 balls to spare. A washout would mean CSK will sail to the playoffs.

Orange alert as heavy rain forecast for 3 days in K'taka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

INDIA Meteorological Department, Bengaluru, on Friday issued an orange alert, forecasting heavy to very heavy rain in parts of coastal and south-interior Karnataka from May 19 to 21. These places may see a dip in maximum temperature by 3 degrees Celsius.

"Karnataka did not receive any rain from December 2023 to this April. However, Karnataka is expected to experience good rain in the next five days," CS Patil, scientist and director, IMD, Bengaluru, said. He said light to moderate rain is expected across the state in the next five days. Orange and yellow alerts have been issued for Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi. These districts are expected to receive 7 cm rain accompanied by thunder, lightning and strong surface winds ranging from 40 to 50 km per hour till May 21.

IMD said more than 75% of southern and coastal Karnataka, and 25-50% of north interior Karnataka will receive rain. The maximum expected temperature will go down by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius in the coming days. Bidar, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Bagalkot, Vijayapura, and Yadgir districts will be unaffected by rain.

ESCAPE BID

Hubballi murder accused stabs woman, jumps off train, near D'gere, caught

G SUBHASH CHANDRA @ Davanagere

PERSONNEL of the Government Railway Police (GRP) caught Girish Sawant alias Vishwa, accused in the Hubballi Anjali Ambiger murder case, near Mayakonda in Davanagere district on Thursday night.

Girish, who had fled Hubballi to Mysuru after allegedly murdering Anjali, boarded the Vishwamanava Express train to Hubballi from Arsikere Junction. An eyewitness said Girish, who was travelling in the general compartment, fought with other passengers over a petty issue. Based on the passengers' complaint, he was questioned by the GRP personnel at Chikkajajur Junction. After he pleaded innocence, the GRP personnel let him go.

However, when the train reached Hanumanahalli, Girish followed Lakshmi, a passenger, to the washroom and demanded that she give him the gold chain she was wearing. When Lakshmi refused and screamed for help, Girish stabbed her, causing a deep injury on her left hand.

Meanwhile, hearing her screams, some passengers rushed to the spot and thrashed Girish, who jumped off the moving train. The GRP personnel, who received this information, caught Girish who was lying injured near the railway tracks at Mayakonda. They admitted him to the Chigateri district hospital, where he revealed his identity. The GRP personnel immediately alerted the Hubballi police, who were after Girish.

A senior police officer checks on an injured Girish Sawant in Davanagere on Friday

The Hubballi police arrived in Davanagere around 11 pm and took Girish into their custody and shifted him to the KIMS Hospital in Hubballi.

Lakshmi from Gadag, who was admitted to the Chigateri district hospital, was shifted to the SSIMS Hospital, where she underwent a minor surgery on Friday.

According to Lakshmi's husband, they were returning home from Tumakuru after visiting the school run by Siddaganga Mutt, seeking admission for their son, when the incident occurred.

He said the GRP personnel helped him shift Lakshmi to the Chigateri district hospital. After the surgery at the SSIMS Hospital, Lakshmi is doing fine, he added. P3

City-bound AI plane returns to Delhi after fire warning

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

A Delhi-Bengaluru Air India flight, carrying 175 people, returned to the national capital on Friday evening after a fire warning from its auxiliary power unit.

After the situation became apparent, a full emergency was declared at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport around 5:52 pm for the Air India flight AI807. The flight landed back safely at IGI Airport around 6.40 pm. "Air India flight AI807 flying Delhi to Bengaluru air returned to Delhi this evening after a fire warning from its auxiliary power unit. After the pilots exercised necessary protocols, the aircraft made an uneventful landing and all passengers and crew deplaned at the aerobridge safely," said an Air India spokesperson. P5

SC seeks EC's response on booth-wise turnout data

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday sought the Election Commission of India's response on a plea seeking directions to the poll body to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of polling for each phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. It gave the poll body a week to file its affidavit. The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), the petitioner, had sought the uploading of scanned copies of Form 17-C (record of the number of votes polled in a booth).

A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra asked ECI counsel Amit Sharma what was the difficulty in putting up the voter turnout details on the website. Sharma replied that it was time consuming. "But every polling officer submits data on the app by evening? So returning officer has data of full constituency by the end of the day," the bench asked Sharma. He replied, "No, not immediately."

In the morning, the ADR moved the application as part of its plea to tally Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips with votes cast through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

FIGHT GETS NASTY

Swati Maliwal leaves Kejriwal's house. She had earlier recorded her statement on the assault by Kejriwal's aide Bibhav | PTI | P9

Clash of surprise picks in Mumbai North Central

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

MUMBAI North Central Lok Sabha constituency, home to several celebrities and spread across many posh areas including Bandra and Vile Parle, is witnessing a close contest between renowned lawyer Ujjwal Nikam of the BJP and Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad.

Interestingly, neither Nikam nor Gaikwad was the first choice of their respective parties. The BJP denied ticket to sitting MP Poonam Mahajan and wanted to field its Mumbai city president Ashish Shelar, who declined to contest saying he is not ready to enter national politics. Then Nikam was picked at the last moment.

As for the Congress, it was considering former Maharashtra minister Naseem Khan, who was very keen to contest from the constituency. That Mumbai North Central has around 4 lakh Muslim voters was also a factor favouring his candidacy. However, alliance partner Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) proposed the name of Varsha Gaikwad as the joint candidate saying Muslim votes alone won't be enough to win the election.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

"If Marathi candidate Varsha Gaikwad is fielded, then Shiv Sena (UBT) will easily transfer its votes to Gaikwad in the fiercely contested battle. The calculation is that there are over 4 lakh Muslims, 1 lakh Christians, 1 lakh Dalits, and a considerable number of Marathi and non-Marathi voters. The BJP won the last two elections because of support from the Shiv Sena. But the BJP does not have it this time; so, it will face an uphill task even though it has a high-profile lawyer as its candidate," said a senior Shiv Sena (UBT) leader, who did not wish to be named.

According to reports, Gaikwad herself was not expecting to fight from Mumbai North Central; her first preference was Mumbai South Central, the constituency of her late father Eknath Gaikwad. However, Uddhav successfully pushed his party's candidate Anil Desai for the Mumbai South Central seat.

Ujjwal Nikam and Varsha Gaikwad

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARDIKAR

Nikam is a well known lawyer, having appeared for several high-profile cases including the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist case, 1993 Bombay bomb blast case, Gulshan Kumar case, and the sensational Pramod Mahajan murder case. The BJP hopes his popularity will help, on top of the Modi factor.

"To win, the BJP needs to get Marathi votes in significant numbers. Otherwise, history will repeat like in 2009, when Congress candidate Priya Dutt trounced senior lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani of the BJP in the Mumbai North Central seat by nearly 1,75,000 votes," said a political observer.

Towards this strategy, the BJP is trying to breach the Sena's traditional Marathi vote bank by arranging rallies by MNS chief Raj Thackeray.